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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to identify factors contributing to the success of instructional development projects. Success factors derived from factor analysis were compared with those in a previous study (Lawrason and Hedberg, 1979), and values obtained on the prediction model for this study were compared with those in the study cited. The Survey of Instructional Development Projects was administered to 220 higher education administrators and others with instructional development positions. Twenty-two factors were reported as contributing to the success of a project; among the high-ranking factors were: expertise of support staff, faculty participation and commitment, provision of financial resources, administrative support and commitment, and incentives for faculty participation. Twenty factors were reported as limiting the success of a project; among those with a high ranking were: lack of faculty participation, lack of time to plan, lack of compensation for faculty participation, and competing institutional projects. Four tables and one figure summarize the results. Contains 37 references. (KM)

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Predicting Success Factors in Instructional Development Projects in Southern Institutions of Higher Education

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Predicting Success Factors In Instructional Development Projects In Southern Institutions of Higher Education

This study provides an examination of factors which contribute to the success of instructional development projects as perceived by administrators, project directors,faculty, and support staff in southern institutions of higher education. The reported success factors and reported limiting factors were compared with those identified in a prediction model obtained from studies on instructional development projects in institutions of higher education in Northeastern United States and Australia.

INTRODUCTION

Instructional development is a euphemism to describe an effort to improve the teaching skills of university faculty members (Popham, 1974). Within these programs are the instructional development (ID) skills that, for years, have been extolled as a means for bringing much needed solutions to immeasurable teaching and learning problems in higher education (Lawrason and Hedberg, 1979).

Although the merits of these programs have geen generally recognized by educators, the research geared toward developing models for the successful implementation and maintenance of an ID program is somewhat limited. The literature is saturated with data on ID characteristics, services, instructional design models, evaluations of ID programs, status of programs, plausible guidelines to consider in implementing ID programs, and many other related activities. However research data which identify the specific factors or combination of factors necessary to maintain a successful ID program are relatively sparse.

Wilson, et al., (1975) stressed the need for faculty, administrators, and institutions to support programs and changes in the reward structure if development efforts are to succeed. Ninety two percent of the faculty they surveyed agreed that teaching effectiveness should be important in promotional standards.

Faculty attitude toward teaching improvement efforts affect the success of instructional development projects. Popham (1979) wrote that university professors have few incentives to improve their teaching prowess since the incentive structure has been closely wedded to research productivity, professional visibility and effective colleague relations.

While concern for teaching improvement absorbs a great deal of time on nations campuses, and while articles on faculty development and improved teaching fill the higher education journals, the question remains whether faculty genuinely care whether improved teaching really counts in the institution (O'Connell and Meeth, 1978). New teaching practices account for faculty nonsupport for instructional development projects (Purdy, 1975). Any innovation in teaching, just to be tried needs every thing going for it. Translated, that means that it must be made as easy as possible for faculty to try new modes of instruction. And not least, there should be no obstacles, personal or institutional, either to a first try or to subsequent tries (Gropper, 1975).

In a Nebraska study, Cross (1977) pointed out that when faculty were asked specifically about improved instruction, they professed a strong commitment to teaching. They also generally reverted to the old standby of clear rewards, smaller classes, reduced class loads, better facilities, and release time as the most effective way to improve teaching.

The importance placed on administrative support must be considered when isolating possible factors affecting instructional development project success.

Hedberg (1979) reported that administrators in higher education have supported curriculum improvement by funding selected projects. However, when initial funding ceased or the director left, the program folded.

In a survey of instructional development actrivities in higher education, Liebler (1979) recommended that instructional development can be successful only if it has the support of key administrators of an institution. Therefore efforts must be made to gain key administrative support.

Although the need to obtain and maintain the willing involvement of faculty is a paramount concern, instructional improvement centers must also secure administrative and instructional support. This includes commitment to the center, institutional policies that support effective teaching and instructional improvement, and provision of adequate financial resources (Gaff, 1978).

The type of administrative support for the implementation of a successful instructional development project may vary from one institution to another. In one institution, administrative support may be in the form of incentives, such as release time, promotion consideration, or monetary support for instructional improvement. In another institution, financial allocations for the program through the school's budget or effective interpersonal relations between the administrator and instructional development staff may characterize the support. Irrespective of the type of support, it is generally conceded that the leadership role performed by the administrator in focusing attention on improving teaching effectiveness significantly affects the continued status and reputation of the instructional development efforts on a particular campus.

In addition to the perceived influence of administrators and faculty on instructional development implementation, some researchers have analyzed the concept of change as a factor to influence innovation, in this case, an instructional

development project. Change must be viewed not in isolation, but in relation to administrators, faculty, the instructional development project staff, and the institutional climate, among other things. A climate for change is the sum total of a series of ingredients beginning with administrative decisions to support innovative policies, establish priorities, and provide sufficient funds for release time and summer employment. Expecting successful change without full administrative support is a fallacy (Diamond, 1971).

The attitude of the faculty is a key element in creating innovative change. In this regard, Spitzer (1977) related that the instructional developer, or anyone interested in working toward educational change and instructional improvement, must recognize that appealing exclusively to the internal needs of the faculty member is not enough. External conditions must also be made attractive enough to motivate instructors to concern themselves with instructional improvement and personal growth.

The instructional development project director and staff hold critical positions in creating the change needed for instructional development implementation. Diamond (1971) suggested that when we begin a program it is vital that we do not only know the power structure in which we work but also that we communicate well with the decision makers within it. We must let them know what we hope to do and how we must articulate their role in instructional innovation

The institutional climate can serve as an indicator of how well change will be accepted. The wider the gap between the existing and proposed change, the greater the resistance to it can be expected. The narrower the gap, the less the resistance to change can be expected. Gradual change is recommended as a strategy for overcoming faculty resistance to instructional development implementation (Gropper, 1977).

Through the identification and analysis of factors which have been observed as significantly relating to the implementation of instructional development projects, this study hoped to discern whether or not a derived factor or combination of factors could provide a model useful for predicting success in instructional development projects.

THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to identify factors which contribute to the successful implementation of instructional development projects in southern institutions of higher education. The research design used for this study was to compare success factors derived through factor analysis with those in a previous study (Lawrason and Hedberg, 1979) and, to compare values obtained on the prediction model for this study with those in the same study cited .

The project success factors were based on the perceptions of administrators, project directors, faculty, and support staff in southern higher education institutions with instructional development projects. The information obtained provided data to answer the following research question: Is there a relationship between the dependent variable of success of instructional development projects (i.e., perception of overall success, project continuation if funds cease, project continuation if project director leaves, and student enrollment generated by the project) and the independent variables of support, faculty incentives, resources, and organizational facilitation as perceived by administrators, project directors, faculty, and support staff.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Five hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. There is a significant relationship between the overall success of instructional development projects and organizational facilitation and administrative financial resources.
2. There is a significant relationship between overall success of instructional development projects and administrative financial resources and faculty incentives.
3. There is a significant relationslhip between overall success of instructional development projects and support personnel.
4. There is a significant relationship between overall success of instructional development projects as measured by continuation if funds cease and support personnel.
5. The success prediction model values obtained in this study will compare with the success prediction model values obtained in the Lawrason and Hedberg study of 1978.

RESEARCH ON FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SUCCESS OF INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

One difficulty in evaluating teaching improvement, a major focus of instructional development, is identifying specific indicators of successful efforts. There are many institutional factors that can have negative or positive influences on teaching and its improvement. These factors include institutional morale, the quality of libraries, media equipment, staff assistance, the congruence of student and faculty interests and abilities, the flexibility and commitment of the administration, the nature of incentives and rewards for improved teaching, and the environment in which the creative and productive capacity of teachers can be increased (Nord, 1971; Gaff, 1976; Alexander and Yelon, 1972; Tennyson, 1978; Knirk and Gustafson, 1986).

FACULTY INCENTIVES

The incentive structure at many institutions of higher education has been closely wedded to research productivity, professional visibility, and effective colleague and faculty interests and abilities, the flexibility and commitment of the relations. However, although many universities take into account good teaching in decisions for promotion, tenure, and salary increases, the reward system is stacked heavily in favor of research (Lawrason, 1978; Wagner, 1977; Lumsden, 1975; Benston, 1973; Jabker and Halinski, 1978; Haney, Lange, et al, 1968; Durzo, 1978). Although teaching, research, and service share the three-pronged mission of higher education, in many institutions research tends to carry more weight when faculty members are rewarded for productivity.

RESOURCES

An instructional development program must have a firm institutional commitment for the technical and financial resources necessary to support instructional innovation. Projects begun without sufficient support for these activities may be compromises or may fail from under nourishment (Durzo, 1978).

Implementing an instructional development program requires serious administrative support in action as well as words. Ideally the support should include financial resources for the program in "hard" monies rather than short term grant; administrative procedures that facilitate change; and, access to various institutional resources such as computers and media support. Without adequate administrative support in the form of material as well as human resources, the success of an instructional development effort is jeopardized (Durzo, 1978; Diamond, 1971; Leonard, 1971; Hammond and Smith, 1976).

ORGANIZATIONAL FACILITATION

Organizational facilitation takes into account factors which promote ease with which an instructional development project is implemented and maintained.

Such factors are institutional climate, acceptance and readiness for innovation and change, faculty support through participation in the project, the decision structure, size of the institution , and the number of people required in decision making are characteristic of organizational facilitation.

Even where organizational and administrative arrangements favor instructional development efforts, faculty must be willing to innovate (Durzo, 1978). If innovation is to be successful, initiative and support must come from at least a part of the faculty with continual innovation requiring a structure of organization and a process within the institution that facilitates the production and evaluation of innovation (Maier and Weidner, 1975).

Gross, Giacquinta and Bernstein, (1963) found that the clarity of the innovation to implementors, their commitment to it, their ability to carry it out, adequate material resources, compatibility with existing organizational structure and values, and sustained leadership are key factors in whether or not a decision to innovate actually becomes a change.

Maier (1963) pointed out, if one regards both decisions and acceptance as part of a single change process, then a fast decision and a tedious attempt at gaining acceptance may be much slower than a long, collaborative process which results in both decision and commitment by implementing faculty at the same time. Incolleges and universities, the decentralization of power over modes of teaching and learning provides central authorities little control over implementation. A decision to change without faculty acceptance may well end up without a resultant change.

SUPPORT

The relationship between the staff of the instrtuctional development project and the faculty members working in the ID project on activities geared toward

improving teaching and learning constitute the support variable. This encompasses the factors of interpersonal relationships, the quality of professional skills available to faculty members, and skills and cooperation of faculty members.

Lawrason and Hedberg (1977) reported, in relation to support staff and faculty members, that the most important internal factor described by most authors related to the skills available to the faculty at the center. Gagne (1987) has suggested that the technical knowledge of support staff is highly valuable to education. Jonassen (1988) also reported that some professional associations have attempted to identify specific tasks required of ID staff. Specific skills included personal dynamics, such as a diagnosis of personal needs and counseling; skills required to move through the instructional development process, such as definition of goals and selection of strategies; technical skills related to the design, production, and implementation of instructional materials; and skills related to the evaluation of needs, people, materials, and programs.

It has become evident that the improvement of instruction necessitates a concerted effort on the part of able teachers, administrators, resource people, and concerned citizens. Studies reveal that successful instructional programs are dependent upon a cooperative network of people, facilities, and resources (Schauer, 1971; Hedberg, 1979; Centra, 19798; Duncan, 1978; Abedor and Gustafson, 1971; Leitzman, et.al.,1980; Walter and Earle, 1982).

In three previous studies (Lawrason and Hedberg, 1977; Lawrason and Hedberg, 1978; and Hedberg, 1979) research was initiated to define and assess the factors crucial to the successful implementation of instructional development projects in higher education. Using the research design of these studies, this study sought to confirm specific factors identified by them as necessary to the success of instructional development projects.

METHOD

Instrumentation

The Survey of Instructional Development Projects (Lawrason and Hedberg, 1978) was used to assess instructional development project success factors. The instrument consisted of three parts: Part I obtained background information on the project; Part II consisted of fifty (50) Likert-type items considered to contribute to the success of instructional development projects; and, Part III asked questions about the overall evaluation of the project.

Procedure

The Survey of Instructional Development Projects was administered to a sample of administrators, project directors, faculty and support staff to confirm the factors identified in the Lawrason and Hedberg studies, and to scale alpha reliabilities. Multiple regression and path analysis were used to test the research hypothesis pertaining to project success.

Sample

A total of 220 subjects from the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Lousiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia comprised the sample. The subjects were identified as higher education administrators, and persons with apparent instructional development positions in an institution of higher education.

Measurement

Factor analysis was used to determine if the four factors identified as support (SUPPORT), faculty incentive (FACINCEN), organizational facilitation (ORGFAC), and financial resources (RESOURCE) could be confirmed; to eliminate questions in the survey with a loading on the four factors of less than .30; and, to obtain values to be used in regression analyses to test the hypotheses posed in the research.

Multiple linear regression was used to test four hypotheses in the study. Hypothesis one attempted to test the significance of the relationship between overall project success (SUCC) and organizational facilitation (ORGFAC) and financial resoources (RESOURCE). Hypothesis two attempted to test the significance of the relationship between overall project success (SUCC) and administrative financial resource (RESOURCE) and faculty (FACINCEN). Hypothesis three attempted to test the significance of the relationship between overall project success (SUCC) and support personnel (SUPPORT). Hypothesis four attempted to test the significance of the relationship between overall project success as defined by project continuation if funds cease (FUND) and support personnel (SUPPORT).

Path analysis was used to test the fifth hypothesis for this study and to provide quantitative values for variables that were used in the prediction model to identify success factors in instructional development projects. The variables included in the development of the path analysis model were project size (PSIZE), academic rank of respondent (RANK), project team part of the respondent (PART), person who initiated the project (PINIT), support personnel (SUPPORT), faculty incentive (FACINCEN), administrative financial resources (RESOURCES), organizational facilitation (ORGFAC) overall project success (SUCC), success if funds cease (FUND), success if project director leaves (DIR), and student enrollment generated by the project (STUD).

RESULTS

The independent variables of project size, academic rank of respondent, project team part of respondent and person who initiated the project were measures of the descriptive nature of the project (See Table1). The dependent variables of perceived success of the project, success if project director leaves, and

student enrollment generated by the project were measures of the perceived overall project success (see Table 2).

The test of reliability yielded a coefficient of .90 for the fifty-item survey. The reliability coefficients for the six subscales follows: SUPPORT, 64; FACULTY INCENTIVE, .51; RESOURCES, .76; ORGANIZATIONAL FACILITATION, .75; CHANGE, .71; AND, STUDENT, .65.

Fifty measures were factor analyzed to obtain four distinct factors.(see Table 3). Composite scores obtained in factor analysis were used in regression analysis to test the four hypotheses and to determine path coefficients to test the fifth hypothesis. In the replicated study, four factors were identified as support, faculty incentives, resources, and organizational facilitation. A confirmation of three clean factors was verified in this study with loadings of greater than .30. Organizational facilitation was not confirmed. The fourth factor obtained for this study was the change factor with a loading of over .30 or more.

Testing of the Hypotheses

Four hypotheses tested were supported. (see Table 4). The fifth hypothesis which tested path relationships with intervening variables was partially supported (see Figure 1). In this figure, significant path relationships existed between the support services factor and organizational facilitation; organizational facilitation and faculty incentives; and, faculty incentives and likelihood of the project project continuing if the director leaves. The success factor of project size and rank of respondent were the intervening variables partialed out in path analysis.In the Lawrason and Hedberg study (1978), the hypothesis related to the significance of the relationship between support and success of projects if funds ceased was supported. Partially supported was the hypothesis related to organizational facilitation, financial resources and faculty incentives. The hypotheses related to

resources, oganizational facilitation and sucess; and support staff and success were not supported.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine what factors contribute to the success of instructional development projects in southern institutions of higher education; and to determine which of these factors could be used to predict the success of the projects. As this study is a replication of three previous studies on predicting success in instructional development projects, the same methodology and statistical analyses were employed.

The dependent variables considered in the study were overall success, project continuation if the project director leaves, project continuation of funds cease, and student enrollment generated by the project. The independent variables were project size, academic rank of the respondent, part played by the respondent on the project team, and the person who initiated the project. Four other independent variables obtained through factor analysis were support, faculty incentives, administrative financial resources, and change. The same factors, with the exception of the change factor were obtained in the replicated study; the organizational facilitation factor was the fourth factor in the replicated study.

There were twenty two different factors reported as contributing to the success of instructional development projects. Included among the high ranking factors were: expertise of support staff, faculty participation and commitment, availability of materials and technical services, the provision of financial resources, administrative skills and leadership skills of the project director, administrative support and commitment, incentives for faculty partricipation in the project, and organization and coordination of the instructional development projects.

There were twenty different factors reported that limited the success of instructional development projects. Included among the high ranking factors that limited project success were: lack of faculty participation, lack of time to actively plan and formulate plans and procedures for the project, lack of compensation for faculty participation, not enough materials production time, limited media services, competing institutional projects, and low level of faculty interest.

The success of any instructional development effort is dependent upon a variety of interrelated factors. Further, the ease with which an instructional development project can be implemented within the organizational structure, coupled with the provision of financial resources by the administration can greatly enhance instructional development project success. Educational institutions should be instrumental in creating an organizational climate that promotes change and innovation as well as providing the resources necessary for project implementation and maintenance.

Since instructional development is an area that, by comparison to other educational activities , is relatively young, continued research regarding its value, significance, and acceptance in the higher education climate must be continued. This continued research may provide meaningful guidelines for educational institutions that are constantly striving to improve teaching and learning in higher education.

TABLE 1

DESCRIPTIVE NATURE OF SAMPLED ID PROJECT*

Independent Variables	Number of Responses	Category
1. Project Size	72	Less than one course
	69	One course
	54	More than one course
	24	General project related to instruction
	1	No data
2. Academic Rank of Respondent	61	Administrator
	29	Department Chair, Head
	48	Academic Staff(tenured)
	34	Academic Staff(non-tenured)
	48	Support Staff
3. Project Team Part of Respondent	40	Project Director
	64	Instructional Designer
	51	General Support
	63	Not a member
	2	No date
4. Person Who Initiated Project	52	Administrator
	58	Academic Staff
	107	Support Staff
	3	No data

*A total of 220 respondents.

TABLE 2

PERCEIVED OVERALL PROJECT SUCCESS

(220 Respondents)

Dependent Variables	% Response	Category
1. Perceived Success of Project	16	Extremely successful
	29	Very successful
	26	Moderately successful
	12	Undecided
	10	Moderately unsuccessful
	5	Very unsuccessful
	1	Extremely unsuccessful
	1	no response
2. Success if project Funds Cease	15	Extremely likely
	29	Very likely
	27	Moderately likely
	11	Undecided
	14	Moderately unlikely
	10	Very unlikely
	4	Extremely unlikely
3. Success if Project Director Leaves	17	Extremely likely
	18	Very likely
	24	Moderately likely
	19	Undecided
	14	Moderately unlikely
	6	Very unlikely
	2	Extremely unlikely
4. Student Enrollment Generated by the Project	7	Extremely increased
	14	Very much increased
	10	Moderately increased
	32	No increase/decrease
	14	Moderately decreased
	15	Very much decreased
	3	Extremely decreased
	5	No response

TABLE 3

VARIMAX ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX

FOR THE FOUR IDENTIFIED SUCCESS FACTORS

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
	CHANGE	RESOURCE	SUPPORT	FACULTY INCENTIVES
VAR05	0.01674	0.27347	0.33095	0.11255
VAR06	0.18327	0.31156	0.22954	0.13106
VAR07	0.00899	0.31517	0.05142	0.17021
VAR08	0.05485	0.46843	0.39088	0.03386
VAR09	0.23894	0.38167	0.19961	0.07498
VAR10	0.22594	0.44109	0.31084	0.01634
VAR11	0.17628	0.26246	0.32475	0.21148
VAR12	0.09376	0.51433	0.09490	0.21148
VAR13	0.08789	0.34496	0.46104	0.14229
VAR14	0.16192	0.12831	0.08948	0.43606
VAR15	0.10201	0.03772	0.61761	0.07864
VAR16	0.18982	0.22681	0.39668	0.18491
VAR17	0.01087	0.03419	0.03912	0.35401
VAR18	0.02023	0.01805	0.33463	0.06477
VAR19	0.25996	0.03332	0.29442	0.05292
VAR20	0.40732	0.28757	0.10153	0.01059
VAR21	0.55712	0.32821	0.18632	0.02002
VAR22	0.42770	0.40711	0.04229	0.12253
VAR23	0.31801	0.29903	0.21284	0.01985
VAR24	0.40108	0.26829	0.35453	0.03252
VAR25	0.35005	0.19064	0.34794	0.27150
VAR26	0.20971	0.33885	0.01028	0.16362
VAR27	0.18675	0.27834	0.39239	0.02598
VAR28	0.29218	0.08266	0.44768	0.01162
VAR29	0.26985	0.20655	0.17594	0.03789
VAR30	0.35350	0.27890	0.14262	0.00965
VAR31	0.29507	0.41011	0.22675	0.02882
VAR32	0.47037	0.30188	0.22205	0.04421
VAR33	0.33466	0.50313	0.08904	0.12031
VAR34	0.03692	0.51277	0.10784	0.17875
VAR35	0.11614	0.60259	0.08745	0.09448
VAR36	0.01892	0.58884	0.11253	0.10741
VAR37	0.29248	0.13226	0.27630	0.04728
VAR38	0.39719	0.09948	0.16124	0.11244
VAR39	0.54463	0.06706	0.03525	0.05495
VAR40	0.37383	0.03979	0.10209	0.14219
VAR41	0.52166	0.09511	0.12575	0.01563
VAR42	0.52666	0.08429	0.25727	0.08783
VAR43	0.27984	0.02288	0.04890	0.29520

TABLE 3-- Continued

VAR44	0.11312	0.00511	0.09314	0.63150
VAR45	0.00597	0.19482	0.06746	0.55666
VAR46	0.14475	0.15880	0.03874	0.38075
VAR47	0.18796	0.21853	0.14924	0.37053
VAR48	0.00988	0.20800	0.22639	0.20345
VAR49	0.36729	0.04302	0.05098	0.44706
VAR50	0.53378	0.07046	0.06253	0.25100
VAR51	0.50091	0.11536	0.05185	0.31180
VAR52	0.48876	0.15069	0.27364	0.02095
VAR53	0.13246	0.30428	0.22415	0.26958
VAR54	0.02885	0.41388	0.10011	0.18799

TABLE 4

HYPOTHESES SUMMARY

HYPOTHESIS	RESULTS
H1 Resource → Success; Organizational Facilitation → Success	Supported (R = .36, F = 14.09, df = 2/186, p < .05)
H2 Resource → Success; Faculty Incentives → Success	Supported (R = .24, F = 6.05, df = 2/189, p < .05)
H3 Support → Success	Supported (R = .36, F = 29.57 df = 1/187, p < .01)
H4 Support → Fund	Supported (R = .26, F = 16.05, df = 1/187, p < .01)

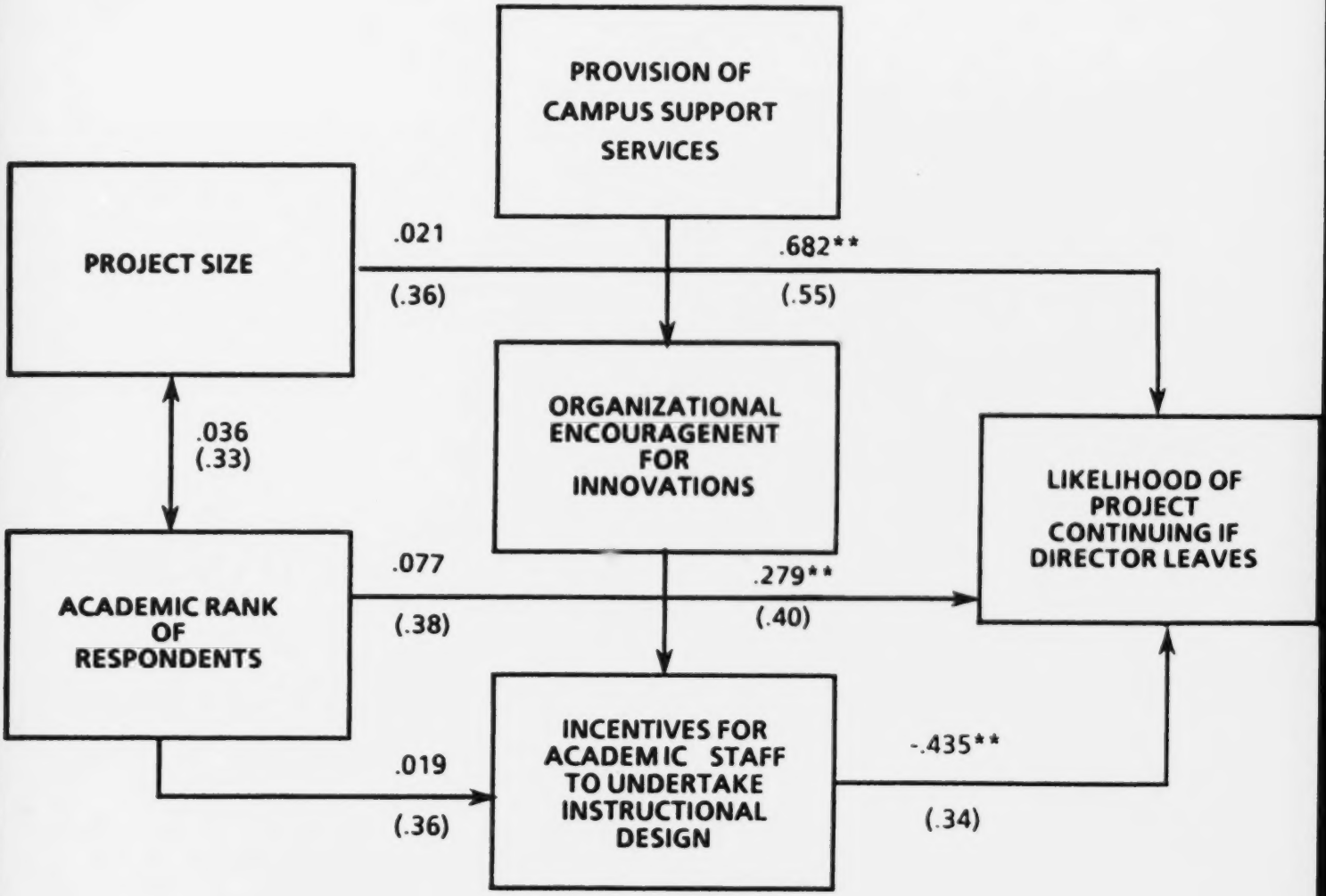

Fig. 1. Factors that predict successful instructional development projects: A comparison of path weights with the Lawrason and Hedberg study, 1978.

***Significant at .01*

NOTE: Those path weights in parentheses were significant in the Lawrason and Hedberg study.

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